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Historic City Center Urban Regeneration: Case of Malaga and Kemeraltı, Izmir

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Abstract

In Turkey, cities grew very fast after 1950's because of the job opportunities and industrial development, which caused a high migration from the rural areas to the cities. Due to the rapid city development, infrastructure, green space and urban facilities could not catch up with the process and resulted in unplanned, inadequate cities. Another result of this is the challenges the historic city centers in a social, environmental and economical way, urbanization damages their characteristic urban identity besides the physical deterioration and economic decay of such centers. Since historic city centers inhabit an important amount of cultural and historical identity, they should be handled very delicately in urban regeneration projects. In order to achieve a sustainable project, such public spaces in historic city centers should be given new functions and the quality should be improved for the citizens to embrace the project and to strengthen the urban identity of the city. This study investigates the urban regeneration project of Malaga, Spain historic city center and further discusses the similarities with Kemeraltı historic center in Izmir and tries to make suggestions for Kemeraltı. The strong relationship between urban regeneration and historic conservation is identified and the importance of citizens' participation along with the local authorities' approach is emphasized.

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1. Introduction

Since 1960's historic urban areas are threatened by rapid contemporary urbanization and emerging concepts of

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heritage conservation in the context of urban regeneration have been discussed worldwide. Every new development and urban growth have affected the physical, social and cultural environment of cities as well as constituting an improvement in urban life. Today, conserving urban historic places is a globally urgent and complex matter due to the fast urban growth and resulting transformation of cities worldwide. Establishing a balanced approach to historic environments has always been a struggle between the old and new causing a tension over continuity and change (Descamps, 2014). Historic city centers are the most important subjects of such a controversy for they are in the heart of urban development and transformation.

Cities are inhabitants' intermediaries of interaction, creativity, culture, and commerce. Historic city centers generally consist of historic buildings, heritage sites, etc. but a city's history reflects a mound of characteristic and identity. The revitalization and conservation of historic city centers are fundamental aspects of change. Additionally, urban regeneration of historic city centers cause social interaction between the local users of the city, and therefore accelerates public activity. This study compares the historic city center urban regeneration projects of two important cities which are İzmir, Turkey and Malaga, Spain. Besides being Mediterranean historical cities, these two have provisional resemblances. The essay specifically examines the strategic urban regeneration plans and approaches that have been made by local authorities and the participation of citizens.

2. Historic Conservation in the Context of Urban Regeneration

Historic city centers serve as a place of identity, memory and belonging (Çubuk, 2012). They create an urban character that can be adopted by the entire city and in many examples, historic city centers embody the city's identity as a result of the heritage they are carrying while new developments come to life around them. Also, due to the high amount of commercial functions, offices and public edifices, city centers generally originates the city's central business regions. As a result, the city center represents the city's economic and social core while adding a considerable value to it.

Achieving a successful historic city center transformation requires the integration of urban regeneration regulations for cultural, social and economical sides that are working well together. Local authorities and citizens' participation have a great role in creating a balance between development and heritage conservation. Urban regeneration is a holistic and integrated action that seeks lasting solutions to urban problems for an area that has been subject to change, in the economic, physical, social, and environmental levels (Akkar, 2006). In other words, urban regeneration process involves various partnerships besides residents, developing plans, methods and policy-based approaches by public and institutional leadership models (Gülersoy and Gürlü, 2011). A holistic policy for historic city center regeneration can be carried into effect by considering the community as a partner and integrating the heritage conservation in the process of urban regeneration leading to a sustainable development (Chohan and Wai Ki, 2005). The goals of this sustainable development can be achieved by social consistency, economic viability and physical improvement harmoniously within an urban regeneration project.

Urban regeneration in the context of historic city center conservation is a fundamental step for change because it generates a variety of economic activity and creative solutions for the urban and social fabric within the historical structure resulting in adoption by society. It is a process where historic urban conservation gains vital importance as well as urban renovation and reuse. This transformation phase attracts inhabitants and visitors to recapture and seize these upgraded neighborhoods leading to an increase in social interaction between citizens. Furthermore, the regeneration of historic city centers maintains their feeling of belonging and perception of identity. In other words, urban regeneration of historic city centers includes conserving history and culture on one hand and its local economic viability on the other (Descamps, 2014).

Nevertheless, urban regeneration approaches in historic city centers can only be successful if they create a balance between the new development and heritage conservation building a bridge between old urban fabric and coming generations. According to World Heritage Convention, cultural heritage is a monument, group of buildings or site of historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological or anthropological value (Chohan and Wai Ki, 2005). The basic meaning of conserving a building is to protect the built and cultural heritage (Turgut and Özden, 2005). Sustainable historical conservation does not enforce irrational costs that can destroy the balance between development and preservation. With this method, social resources and economic assets can be maintained while sense of place belonging is strengthened. In other words, heritage conservation mostly helps to discover the cultural

and historical character of cities in the light of urban form diversity becoming an essential factor and catalyst in urban regeneration projects.

The Results of this study hopes to provide insight to the regeneration policies for historic city center urban regeneration projects. Identifying a relationship between historical conservation and urban planning, this paper will compare the two historic city center urban regeneration projects focusing on local authorities' approaches, involving local people, balance between old and new, and finally adopting and developing an integrated approach.

3. Malaga - Spain Historic City Center Urban Regeneration

Malaga is the second most populous city of Andalusia with a history of 2800 years. It is located on the Costa del Sol of the Mediterranean approximately 130 km north of Africa. Phoenicians founded Malaga around 770 BC and from 6th century BC until 218 BC, it was under the hegemony of Ancient Carthage. Followed by Roman Empire rule, the city was under Islamic domination for 800 years until 1487 when it came under Christian rule again in the Reconquista (Starlight, 2012). As a result of this diversity, Malaga's historic city center is like an open-air museum containing archaeological remains and monuments from the Phoenician, Roman, Arabic and Christian eras. Today, Malaga is one of the main economic and financial centers of southern Spain, home to the region's largest bank, Unicaja, and the fourth-ranking city in economic activity in Spain (Building the 'good city' in the south of Europe, 2013).

The city of Malaga grew at a significant pace between 1960 and 1980, its population doubled increasing even more in the summer. The tourism sector acted two sided for the city. On the one hand it was a great source of income but the rapid growth in the supply of tourist services attracted a population originally employed in agricultural work that wanted to increase their low level of income. Physically they settled in the central areas in slums and on the outskirts of the city, which grew greatly and chaotically, with huge problems of shantytowns and the breakdown of the environment (Starlight, 2012). The uncontrolled growth during this period lacked urban infrastructure and local authorities' support. Therefore this Mediterranean city on the seaside had lost its attractiveness and needed urgent action. At the same time, growth spreading to the outside of the city caused the marginalization and deterioration of the historic city center. The process of decentralization and abandonment of the city center as an urban part of the city has caused not just the loss of population and the physical deterioration of its urban areas and main squares, but the desertion of its functional and symbolic capabilities as the central area of the city.

In 1995, Iniciativa Urbana Arrabales-Carretería program started upgrading Malaga's historic center, developing parks and green areas, restoring damaged buildings and cultivating the town's historic heritage (Programmes for Improving the Urban Environment in Malaga (Spain), 1998). The main objective was to develop a better quality tourism and improve urban services for inhabitants. A plan was prepared for the color of the center, in which the buildings were ordered according to the historical period (baroque, eclectic, contemporary and modern) and their level of preservation, subsidies were set up for refurbishing the façades which would also make it possible to improve the buildings. Houses in the town center were restored in their original architectural style, a number of physical actions for the recovery of broken down areas (area around the streets called Camas and Alcazabilla), clearing of congested areas (S. Julian and Pozos Dulces Squares) and sewage and waste-treatment systems were upgraded, 5 parks which make more than 1 million m² green areas were redounded giving the city a breath of fresh air. Begging, prostitution and immigration were the most important aspects of the intervention in the historic center. To better inform and advise foreign visitors and tourists, about a hundred officers were selected for special training in foreign languages. Some 85 local shops and businesses were given subsidies to improve their signs, to increase safety provisions and customer service. In the process, 75 new jobs were created. Malaga's social services were given special attention, and relocated to a fully refurbished office and the number of staff was increased to improve service (EU, 2005). The appearance of Malaga's historic city center inside the ancient walls has been improved greatly through physical regeneration. To sustain this new image, the program also integrated a set of social and economic measures that were implemented at the same time with building renewals. The development of the economic fabric was strengthened by promoting private enterprise in the modernization of the production capacities of the small businesses located in the area (Programmes for Improving the Urban Environment in Malaga (Spain), 1998).



Fig. 1. Plaza del Pericon, before and after (Akkar, 2006)

The main thrust of the regeneration strategy is the adaptation of space and the urban fabric to a diversity of uses. It seeks to avoid a city center which is only for working and shopping. Instead the intention is to combine business with traffic, visitors with residents, neighbors and housing, pedestrian zones with parking facilities – all in a context of urban quality. To achieve this, new cultural facilities were needed, but also new and renovated housing, new schools, local services and measures to reduce social exclusion (Building the ‘good city’ in the south of Europe, 2013). These diverse actions are the focus of the Iniciativa Urbana and these are the challenges that it still faces. The local authority was aware that although it is expensive, the city's historic center would be regenerated easier in the context of physical regeneration. However, while financial resources were available to do this, they recognized that the operation would not succeed if they failed to define the future model of the center, specifying such features as use, access and equipment.

The comprehensive regeneration of the historic center of Malaga aims to strengthen its identity, its multiple functions and the quality of its public space. Its sustainable city model combines a high quality of life for its population and the participation of its citizens with the economic and cultural development of the central area to cope with the increasing numbers of visitors and tourists. The project is led in a vibrant and committed way by the city council of Malaga with the support of the EU (Starlight, 2012). The importance of this project is due to the comprehensive regeneration approach, it takes social deterioration, economic improvement and environmental sustainability into account all at once, and answers at the same time the needs of residents and visitors. This approach avoids isolation and forcing lower income residents to move away. The local authority showed a real commitment to setting up a strong citizen participation process, generating new lines of communication with the main local associations and with individual citizens, in the framework of different activities and projects to promote social inclusion. Value is added to the historical, cultural and touristic areas by the programs, although the problems of sustainability as regards to social marginalization still represent a question that is very difficult to solve.

4. Kemeraltı - Izmir Historic City Center Urban Regeneration

Izmir is the third most populous city of Turkey with deep historic roots going back 8500 years. The city has been under the hegemony of Hittites, Greeks, Lydians, Persians, Alexander the Great, Romans and Ottoman Empire throughout history until today. The historic city center mentioned in this article is thought to be originated 300 BC as New Smyrna by Alexander the Great. The city had a port which turned into an inner bay dominated by the port castle which was built by the Byzantine Empire in 12th century and this area emerged as the commercial and therefore the social city center. This port was the western end of the Silk Road and after Ottomans took charge of the city, the port was filled forming a made ground where Kemeraltı Bazaar was extended to (Keesder.org, 2014). This historic city center is a region still continuing its traditional structure where residential and commercial areas intersect. Anafartalar Street traces a wide curve and constitutes the principal axis of Kemeraltı. The district consists of a large area extending from the level of the Agora of Smyrna (the quarters of Namazgah, Mezarlıkbaşı and İkiçeşmelik), to Konak Square. It remains one of the liveliest and most touristic parts of İzmir.

The bazaar generally attracts families with low and mid-ranged income and traditionally the streets and buildings are grouped according to the type of craftsmanship. The area contains many historic inns, shops and mosques, the oldest one being Hisar Mosque which was built in 1592 (V3.arkitera.com, 2004). However, İzmir lived the disadvantages of fast growth through the second half of 20th century that happened in the entire country. Bus terminal, court house, warehouses, hotels, manufacturing shops, etc. all moved out abandoning the historic center. The process of decentralization turned Kemeraltı into

a retail trading center rather than an economic center. This retail trading took place in small shops increasing the problems of ownership. Besides, the craftsmanship grouping started to melt and different functions emerged in the same areas breaking the traditional urban fabric. The buildings were too expensive when compared with their parcel prices and so the owners started to demolish the old buildings emerging high story structures instead (Ecemiş Kılıç and Aydoğan, 2006). The ones that weren't demolished were abandoned and the shopping function started to move out to new malls and plazas outside the historic center. Tourism had also finished due to the decentralization and besides, the tourist number coming to İzmir had decreased dramatically (Izmir.gen.tr, 2014). This is the summary of the decline of Kemeraltı historic center emerging many problems in physical, environmental, functional, and economic areas.



Fig. 2 & Fig. 3 & Fig. 4. Kemeraltı façade renewals, before and after (<http://wowturkey.com>, 2008)

In 2008, local authorities started an urban regeneration process for the historic axis of İzmir (Kadifekale, Roma Road, Antique Theater, Agora) and the historic city center Kemeraltı. In order to rehabilitate Kemeraltı and surroundings by conservation of historic urban fabric and development of new functions, the first step was the Anafartalar street façade regeneration project. This project included the restoration and renewal of 72 shops' façades overlooking 215 meter long Anafartalar Street. After this, many other streets including 853rd street, Kestelli Road, National Library Street, Havra Street had façade regenerations with old mosques, banks and inns (Ebelediye.info, 2009). As an addition to façade renewal, İzmir Municipality opened a design competition for Kemeraltı upper layer cover coating and urban furnitures in order to remove the irregular and formless cover coats which are being used by the local shop owners (V3.arkitera.com, 2008). This way, the identity of the historic city center won't be damaged and a standard aesthetic will be applied as part of the urban regeneration project. Within the Historic axis regeneration project, a wide area including, Kadifekale, Agora and Kemeraltı will be transformed to serve as a touristic attraction center forming a "culture and heritage" route. Besides, the municipality started working on infrastructure taking electric and telephone cables underground and designing a new lighting for the historic bazaar. Shop signboards were standardized according to the regeneration project.



Fig. 5. & Fig. 6. Kemeraltı upper layer cover coating competition (V3.arkitera.com, 2008)

In the scope of this historic city center regeneration project, drawings of the buildings in accordance with their original styles were made and all the colors to be used were specified for every shop. These regeneration projects were introduced to shop owners in a collective meeting of craftsmen, local authorities and press (Ecemiş Kılıç and Aydoğan, 2006). Shop owners participated in this process and accepted to maintain and renew their buildings removing the irrelevant additions that damage the historic urban fabric. Throughout this process local authorities will support and help with special attendants.

Physical conservation and regeneration were thought to have a socioeconomic dimension and therefore plans were prepared by a university, not a single design office. A very holistic intellectual process was behind this planning project. The objective was to start an operation, which not only the buildings would be preserved but the historic city center would be revived (Kemeraltı Koruma Amaçlı İmar Planı, 2010). This vision includes originating a source for spatial conservation by boosting the economy in this area. In order to do so, a new image for the historic city center and surroundings was created and the area became an attraction for local and foreign users emerging an economic potential. The perspective and strategy of revival transformed the historic center in a physical, economical, and social manner besides forming a bridge between the past and future reminding the urban identity to the city. This regeneration project is a successful application of historic city center regeneration based on retail and tourism sector and conserving the urban characteristics of the city.

5. Comparison

Though Malaga had a classic European urban development, the rapid economic and urban growth brought along elements of dependent development that are so usual in developing cities. For this reason, the resemblance of the processes undergone in Malaga may perhaps be of greater use for Kemeraltı urban regeneration project. These two cities have a lot of similar sides starting with their history. They have both undergone eastern and western eras resulting in their historic city center image being home to a diversity of cultures throughout history. Their declines also alike, they were both deserted and the urban identity of the city was faced with destruction in both examples. Either of the two Mediterranean cities lived the ups and downs of being a main touristic attraction with a phase of breaking down the urban historic fabric.

Both historic city center regenerations are publicly participated projects where the original styles of historic buildings are restored in a comprehensive manner. Both projects had the aim of reviving the tourism in the historic city center but in Malaga example, touristic staff was educated by local authorities which can be helpful in order to achieve a conscious touristic and economic revival. Izmir Kemeraltı can be described roughly as a bazaar but the diversity of uses strategy in Malaga example can be handy because it will help the historic city center transform more rapidly. Also, it can be a major change for security matters, the more the area is used, the more secure it will get. Especially at nights, Kemeraltı is like a ghost city and not very secure. In order to maintain this, new cultural facilities are needed but this can only come to life in time. Finally, Malaga project considered green areas and parks important and worked on their regeneration. Kemeraltı needs such a fresh air also, both environmentally and for public use. Learning from Malaga, Kemeraltı historic city center project may become more comprehensive and balanced.

In each example, it can be observed that both cities are subjected to constant pressure to meet the needs of many users. An expanding range of actors are involved in the urban planning and conservation processes that are needed to achieve the successful, proactive, integrated conservation of heritage and to manage inevitable change and demands for sustainable development. Conservation of the urban historic environment implies a shared responsibility in which decision makers, owners, inhabitants, users, and visitors play key roles (Tarihi Çevrede Koruma: Yaklaşımlar, Uygulamalar, 2009). If the conservation is isolated or confined to only monument conservation, the resulting lack of integration into the general city-planning framework limits success. However, to aim for an integrated approach, the responsibility must be shared beyond the conservation practitioner in both Malaga and Kemeraltı. Each party has a unique and specific act when it comes to the management of the historic urban area. The relationship between the players is also important. Roles and engagements of all the actors need to be clearly defined in order to achieve a successful historic city center urban regeneration.

6. Conclusion

Urban areas are living organisms that must evolve and adjust to the changing needs of their occupants. The challenge is to oversee change in a manner that adjusts the apparently contradicting, yet frequently united powers of preservation and development. Tending to protection needs requires enhanced administration of progress to alleviate the potential negative effects on the historic urban center. In order achieve this the heritage significance of the historic city center need to be specified and components for their conservation and administration need to be integrated into the general planning structure. These components must consider the need for modernization, enhanced expectations for daily usage, and new urban requirements. Social transformation can have a significant effect on the historic urban texture. An advanced comprehension of the physical effect of social transformation is critical to distinguishing new systems for overseeing such effects and discovering approaches to effectively oblige propels in society that hold the legacy essentialness of an urban region. Plainly recognizing elusive heritage values that add to the historic identity of an urban area is likewise indispensable.

Urban and preservation planning ought to be better coordinated crosswise over expert circles of urban planning, including social and financial aspects of development. There is a possibility to incorporate protection in the element of an urban region's enhancement, to better integrate preservation in the resolution process of different fields, and guarantee a multidisciplinary approach that would encourage the incorporation of social needs with different needs of current life, for example, transportation and infrastructure. Perceiving conservation from different points of view through different disciplines, for example, environment, education, and health, would add to a more enthused disposition and, therefore, be more effective.

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